







After Earth, Mars was probably the second most exciting planet to design. We knew it would have human architecture, and we wanted to capture the realistic feel of a drill site on the red planet, excavating Prothean secrets of the Mars archive. We kept the base quite low to the ground to help it survive sandstorms and other harsh Martian weather, and went with a circular design that supported a large drilling shaft down the middle. The large spokes coming off the circle serve as docking stations for shuttles and rovers.









Sur'Kesh, the salarian home world, had to harbor an amphibious species. We went with a lush, tropical jungle that implied humidity. We thought the large curves of the structures mimicked some of the more organic shapes in salarian armor and clothing. The actual inspiration for this building was a shopping center in Istanbul. We intentionally designed the interiors to blur the line between the landscape and the structure, which helped give the base a very open and inviting feeling. The rubble is the result of Cerberus dropping in a commando team, turning the idyllic building into a battleground.





Tuchanka was well established in *Mass Effect 2* as a bomb-blasted planet that was mostly rubble. The above image was a very early concept showing what Reaper walkers invading the planet might look like. The lost krogan city on the facing page was meant to evoke the feeling that the krogan were worth saving, and that they once created things of beauty before their society crumbled and and the krogan nearly became extinct. We showed minor battle damage as well as sparse foliage to imply that life had a small, fragile hope of persisting, even in the midst of mass destruction.









The challenge for Rannoch, the quarian homeworld, was to create a place that seemed consistent with two alien styles: quarian architecture, seen on the Migrant Fleet, and geth architecture, introduced by the geth occupation of the quarian planet centuries prior. We decided to keep Rannoch's quarian environments industrial looking, with modular stainless-steel sections similar to the Lloyd's of London building. The interiors and exteriors were meant to blend—there was no hard line between the two.









In previous games, players visited asari-influenced worlds, so we knew how to style the asari homeworld for *Mass Effect 3*. The architecture has a lot of large, swooping curves, reminiscent of the work of architect Santiago Calatrava. The above image is an early concept for Thessia that did not show the battle damage from a Reaper invasion that eventually made it into *Mass Effect 3*. The concept on the facing page is for the asari temple on Thessia, which includes upward-swooping lines like a cathedral. The lower images show some of the battle damage added to the planet to tie it to the Reaper attack.





We had seen the Citadel in the previous two games, but we needed a few more concepts to show the station from a new angle in *Mass Effect 3*. The image on the facing page is a concept for the keeper tunnels that were never used, where the creatures would walk around to maintain the station. The blue pads used mass-effect fields to keep the outer skin of the ward arms separate from the rest of the structure so it could shrug off incredible impacts during battle.





The top image is an early concept of a turian outpost, created when we were trying to get a handle on their design. We knew what their ships looked like, but not their architecture. The below two images were made after it was decided that the turians would have a base on Menaë, Palaven's moon, from which they could organize a counter-attack on the Reapers. The turian structures were designed to be portable military fortifications that could be set up hastily.





These are early concepts imagining the Cerberus headquarters. The top image represents a version in which the Illusive Man is not viewing a hologram but instead has a window that looks out at a dying star. The image on the facing page envisions what the room would look like following a violent confrontation.

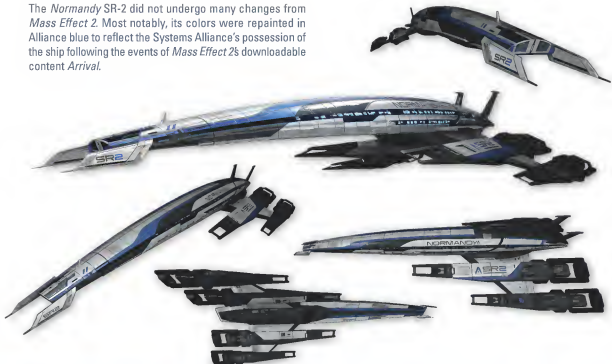


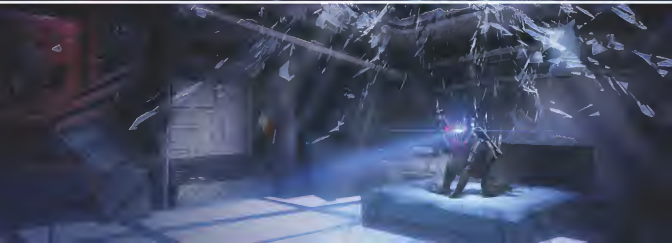
This is what the final room might have looked like if Shepard fought him in this space. The concept is meant to show the moment right before the confrontation, during which Shepard is walking past the bodies of the last of the Illusive Man's Cerberus troops.





The *Normandy* SR-2 did not undergo many changes from *Mass Effect 2*. Most notably, its colors were repainted in Alliance blue to reflect the Systems Alliance's possession of the ship following the events of *Mass Effect 2*'s downloadable content *Arrival*.







The human ships in the original *Mass Effect* had red and white detailing. As production progressed on *Mass Effect 3*, we decided that Alliance colors should instead be blue and white. These ships were to be featured heavily in the final battle scenes.





We created the omni-blade to make melee combat as exciting as gunplay. The blade is similar to the omni-tool from the previous games, but it is not entirely holographic. In *Mass Effect 3*, the omni-tool uses an ultrafast fabricator to manufacture a disposable blade almost instantly.





The Crucible is meant to evoke an enormous, rocket-propelled bomb: something like a cross between the Trinity bomb and a NASA space probe.





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